



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Joanne Sturges, Acting Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chief Administrative Officer

At its meeting held March 14, 2006, the Board took the following action:

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The following revised statement was entered into the record for Supervisors Knabe and Yaroslavsky:

“On October 29, 2002, the Board of Supervisors directed the Children's Planning Council (CPC) to develop strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect. CPC partnered with the Commission for Children and Families and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to lead a Prevention Workgroup consisting of multiple County departments and community organizations. The workgroup produced a plan, ‘Preventing Child Maltreatment,’ (Plan) which defined three essential levels of prevention: **Primary prevention:** Universal efforts that target the general population, supporting families so they can provide the best possible care for their children, thereby preventing maltreatment from occurring; **Second level of prevention:** efforts that target families who may have special needs for supportive services or have been identified as being at high risk as a result of one or more inconclusive reports to protective services. Families typically participate on a voluntary basis; **Third level of prevention:** efforts that target families when maltreatment has been substantiated. Services that aim to prevent further maltreatment and/or reduce the negative consequences of maltreatment may be mandated.

“The Plan arrived at two very compelling conclusions: 1) The lack of an effective prevention strategy in Los Angeles County has significantly compromised child safety; and 2) that the Department of Children and Family Services is not primarily responsible for the prevention of child abuse or neglect.

“In order to prevent harm to children, we must look beyond the boundaries of DCFS and focus on creating a holistic, integrated approach to services that strengthen and support families. This can be addressed by examining the root causes of child abuse or neglect, such as poverty, lack of job training, mental illness, substance abuse, lack of child care, inadequate understanding of parenting responsibilities, and the importance of early child development.

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“A community-specific prevention system would help to alleviate social and economic pressures on at-risk families before they require a more intensive intervention, by working proactively on challenges that families encounter. Formal support systems like DCFS, Probation, Public Social Services, Community Development Commission, Mental Health and Health Services, should be integrated with community-based networks to form a community-based, family support system. Such services could include helping families place their young children in quality early childhood development centers, connecting families with employment, medical care, substance abuse services, affordable housing, and providing information about parenting and child development.

“We believe that the findings of the prevention workgroup are significant and timely, and that we must work towards implementation of a prevention strategy. There is a genuine opportunity before us to do so by building on the knowledge and practical know-how of community-based organizations with experience in this arena. Combining their practical experience with strong evidentiary research regarding prevention, and the resources of County departments, would help the County to go beyond just doing what we can to help families pick up the pieces once they’ve fallen through the safety net.”

Richard Robinson addressed the Board.

After discussion, on recommendation of Supervisors Knabe and Yaroslavsky, and on motion of Supervisor Burke, seconded by Supervisor Antonovich, unanimously carried (Supervisor Molina being absent), the Chief Administrative Officer was instructed, in partnership with the Children’s Planning Council, the Commission for Children and Families, the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect and the New Directions Task Force, to submit a plan by July 2006 that identifies what is required to fund, organize, test, implement, contract for, and administer a community specific prevention program in Los Angeles County to help alleviate social and economic pressures on at-risk families before they require a more intensive intervention, by working proactively on challenges that families encounter, including a timeframe for piloting and implementation, and to provide quarterly status reports to the Board, starting in September 2006, for one year on the accomplishments of this effort.

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Copies distributed:

- Each Supervisor
- County Counsel
- Acting Director of Health Services
- Chief Probation Officer
- Director of Children and Family Services
- Director of Mental Health
- Director of Public Social Services
- Executive Director, Community Development Commission
- Executive Director, Commission for Children and Families
- Executive Director, Children’s Planning Council
- Executive Director, Inter-Agency Council on
Child Abuse and Neglect